The Stamps of Canada, Chapter XV, Part 1
The Numeral Issue of 1898

Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

The complete set of Numerals, Sc. 74-84, plus in the upper left the 1/2¢ Maple Leaf, Sc. 66, for comparison purposes with the Numerals design.

The "maple-leaf" issue had not been long in use before complaints were made that owing to the lack of plain numerals it was a difficult matter to distinguish the various denominations. In its issue for April 2nd, 1898, the *Metropolitan Philatelist* stated another ground for complaint and also referred to a forthcoming change, viz.:—

Much dissatisfaction is expressed by the French speaking inhabitants of the rural parts at the lack of figures of value on the stamps, the denomination in all cases being printed in English which they are unable to understand. It has, therefore, been decided to alter the new stamps by removing the maple leaves from the lower corners and inserting large numerals of value in their place. The space occupied by the head will also be somewhat enlarged and the value will be placed on a straight band below.

A few months later the redrawn stamps made their appearance, for the *Monthly Journal* for July 30th, 1898, records the issue of the 1¢ and 3¢ denominations as follows:—

The design is certainly improved, the oval being enlarged so that its outer line covers the outer line of the rectangle at each side and at top and bottom. The band being the same width as before, this allows a larger space for the head, which no longer appears so closely "cribbed, cabined and confined." The inscriptions remain unchanged, but in each of the lower corners is a plain rectangular block, containing a colored numeral. *(See 1/2¢ stamps above left for a comparison.)*

Mr. Howes states that these two values were issued on June 21st, 1898, and, following its usual custom, the Canadian Post-office did not place the other denominations on sale until the corresponding values of the old series were all used up. Thus, the 1/2¢, 2¢ and 6¢ did not appear until early in September, the 8¢ was placed on sale in the first few days of October, the 10¢ was issued in the early part of November, while the 5¢, which was the laggard of the series, was not on sale until July 3rd, 1899.

Although the design was entirely redrawn and the wider oval gave the portrait a less cramped effect, it did not satisfy all the critics—though, so far as this fact is concerned, it is doubtful if any stamp issued anywhere at any time has met with universal approbation!

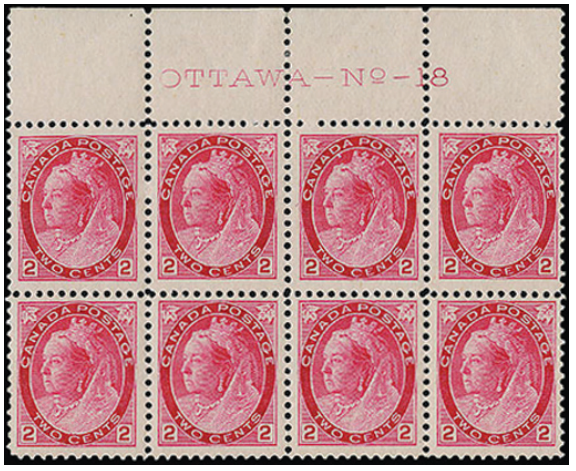
The stamps were produced by the usual method of steel engraved plates and they were printed in sheets of 100, in ten rows of ten, as had now become the regular custom.

The Stamps of Canada, Chapter XV, Part 2
The Numeral Issue of 1898

Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

The imprint on the Numeral issue is like that on the sheets of the "maple leaf" issue and, again as with that series, the numbering of the plates started with "1" for each denomination. So little interest seems to have been taken in these marginal varieties that no authoritative record of the several plates employed has been kept. Mr. Howes gives but one plate for the 1/2¢, 6¢, 8¢ and 10¢ values, three for the 5¢, four each for the 2¢ and 3¢, and six for the 1¢, but it seems highly probable there were many more especially for such values as the 1¢ and 2¢ which were used in very large quantities.

7¢ olive yellow top margin Plate No 1 Imprint block of eight



2¢ carmine die II top margin Plate No 18 Imprint block of eight

In 1901 there were rumours that some of the stamps of this type had been re-engraved, the foundation for the canard being the following paragraph from the *Weekly*:—

Mr. H. A. Chapman has sent me a specimen of a re-engraved 1¢ Canada numeral, in which the differences from the first issue demand recognition. The re-engraved type is shorter and wider than the one preceding it. I note also that the 2¢ is said to exist in the same condition.

In reprinting this statement the *Philatelic Record* observed "Can this be true; or is it only another case of a slight difference caused by the shrinkage after wetting the sheets for printing purposes?"

The *Monthly Journal* for September. 1901, soon set the matter at rest as shown by the following extract:—

Miss A. L. Swift very kindly informs us that a friend of hers made enquiries at headquarters in Ottawa, and was assured that no re-engraving whatever has taken place, and that any differences that exist must be due to shrinkage or expansion of the paper during the process of printing. Our correspondent, who is a well-known American writer upon philatelic subjects and a careful philatelist, tells us that the 1/2¢, 1¢ and 2¢ of the numeral type and several values of the Maple Leaf type, show these variations, and adds that in the case of the 1/2¢ of both issues one size is found in grey-black only, and the other in deep black only. It is possible that the amount or thickness of the ink employed may have some effect upon the varying shrinkage of the paper.

The same journal refers to the matter again in the following month, viz.:—

In reference to the question of the variations in the size of the stamps of the last two issues of this Colony, a correspondent tells us that he has been studying these stamps, and has come to the conclusion, no doubt correctly, that the variations are due to differences in the quality and thickness of the paper. As in the old case of the Ceylon stamps the longer copies are on thicker paper than the short ones. All stamps that are printed on damp paper, and especially those from plates engraved in taille-douce [copper plate printing], *are liable to vary in this way.*

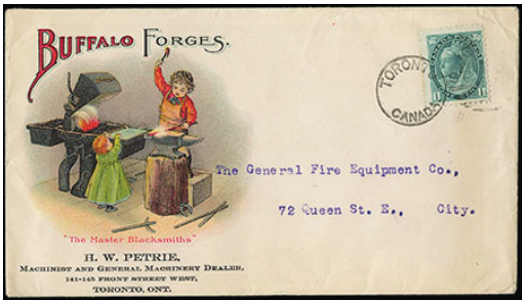
The above seems to be the most reasonable explanation of the differences, for the measurements of the so-called long and short stamps are practically constant, which one would naturally expect to find if two sorts of paper, differing slightly in thickness and quality, were used.

The Stamps of Canada, Chapter XV, Part 3
The Numeral Issue of 1898

Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

In our February 19 issue we completed the text portion of the Numerals Issues section from B.W.H. Poole's "The Stamps of Canada." In this installment we present usages that were not covered in the text, but which I feel should be part of our coverage. JFD.

1/2¢ black (Sc. 74) franking tied by Halifax 6 JY '99 cds to multi-colored advertising local cover, paying the unsealed circular/printed matter rate.

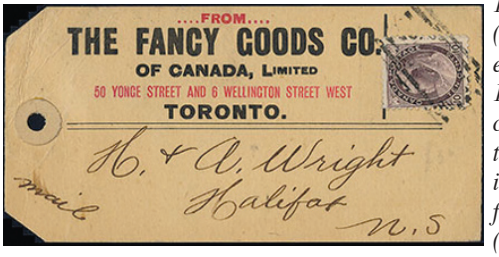


1¢ grey green (Sc. 75) tied by undated Toronto Station 'B' duplex cancel to illustrated advertising drop letter "City." cover.

2¢ carmine die I (Sc. 77), three copies plus a diagonal bisect (unofficial but tolerated usage), all tied by grids to domestic registered cover (7¢ rate) from Frizzleton 25 JU '00 to Halifax.

5¢ blue (Sc. 79) paying the 5¢ UPU rate used for forwarding a cover originally mailed from Southampton, England 5 AP '00 with a 1d lilac to Victoria, British Columbia, received 19 AP and Canadian stamp applied next day and tied by duplex cancel, re-directed to Japan with Yokohama 15 MY receiver on back.

8¢ orange (Sc. 82) tied by Kingston 10 NO '98 cds to registered cover to USA, paying 3¢ postage plus 5¢ registration, cover with transits and 14 NOV Clinton, Iowa arrival on back.



10¢ brown violet (Sc. 83) tied by roller to undated (likely 1899 or 1900) Parcel Tag from Toronto to Halifax, paying for a 10 ounce fifth-class parcel (1¢ per ounce).

Four 1/2¢, 1¢, 2¢ and 20¢ Numeral plus 2¢ Map in eight stamp 27¢ combination franking, all tied by Winnipeg 9 AP '12 cds cancels to registered envelope to USA (Sc. 74x4, 75, 77, 84, 85.

Reference List. (The numbers to the left are the author's issue count.) 1898-9. Engraved and printed by the American Bank Note Co., Ottawa, on white wove paper. Perf. 12.

60. 1/2¢ black, Scott's No. 74.
61. 1¢ green, Scott's No. 75.
62. 2¢ purple, Scott's No. 76.

Not in author's list, 2¢ carmine, Scott No. 77.

63. 3¢ carmine, Scott's No. 78.
64. 5¢ dark blue on bluish, Scott's No. 79.
65. 6¢ brown, Scott's No. 80.

Not in author's list, 7¢ yellow, Scott's No. 81

66. 8¢ orange, Scott's No. 82.
67. 10¢ brown-violet, Scott's No. 83.

Not in author's list, 20¢ olive green, Scott's No. 84